

Applicant : Bruce C. Bacon
Serial No. : 10/806,264
Confirmation : 1927
Atty. Dkt. : BAU03 P-308
Page : 2

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0002] with the following amended paragraph.

[0002] --Releasable latches are used extensively in vehicles, such as boats, aircraft and the like, and in particular passenger cars, vans, trucks, motor coaches and recreational vehicles to secure hoods, trunk lids, access doors, storage compartment doors, tonneau covers and other similar closure structures. Many such releasable latches are known as slam latches, and interface with a lock strike to lock and unlock the associated closure. Slam latches typically include a latch member and a release member rotatably mounted in a housing and configured to selectively receive the lock strike therein. Relative motion between the housing and the lock strike rotates the latch member into a locked position in which the lock strike is retained in the housing. To release the lock strike, the release member is pivoted, thereby disengaging the latch member, and permitting the lock strike to be moved away from the housing.--

Please replace paragraph [0006] with the following amended paragraph.

[0006] --Another aspect of the present invention is a method for making rotary latches of the type having a rotary latch member and a pivoting release member which selectively interact to retain and release a lock strike. The method includes forming a rigid, generally U-shaped housing defined by a base and opposing sidewalls upstanding from opposite sides of the base in a mutually parallel relationship with a set of laterally aligned, outwardly opening strike notches

Applicant : Bruce C. Bacon
Serial No. : 10/806,264
Confirmation : 1927
Atty. Dkt. : BAU03 P-308
Page : 3

in the sidewalls to selectively receive a portion of the lock strike therein. The method also includes forming [[a]]mounting apertures through the latch member and the release member, as well as forming a first set of mounting apertures laterally through the sidewalls of the housing about a first pivot axis disposed generally perpendicular with the sidewalls, and spaced laterally apart from the strike notches. The method further includes inserting a first retainer through the first set of housing mounting apertures and the mounting aperture in the latch member to pivotally mount the latch member in the housing between the sidewalls for rotation in a plane generally parallel with the sidewalls, forming a second set of mounting apertures laterally through the sidewalls of the housing about a second pivot axis disposed generally parallel with and spaced laterally apart from the first pivot axis, and inserting a second retainer through the second set of housing mounting apertures and the mounting aperture in the release member to pivotally mount the release member in the housing between the sidewalls for rotation in a plane generally parallel with the sidewalls, and selective engagement with the rotary latch. Finally, the method also includes locating the first pivot axis and the second pivot axis in a laterally aligned relationship on the sidewalls to facilitate mounting the rotary latch in both left and right hand latch locations.--

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Applicant : Bruce C. Bacon
Serial No. : 10/806,264
Confirmation : 1927
Atty. Dkt. : BAU03 P-308
Page : 4

[0007] --Yet another aspect of the present invention provides a rotary latch having an enlarged capture area or window between the housing and the lock strike to avoid contact between the same, even when the latch and the lock strike are somewhat misaligned. Preferably, the housing is die cast, to provide a very rigid structure that positively retains the lock strike, even after substantial use. The rotary latch has an uncomplicated design, is efficient in use, economical to manufacture, capable of a long operating life, and particularly well adapted for the proposed~~purposed~~ use.--

Please replace paragraph [0032] with the following amended paragraph.

[0032] --As best illustrated in Figs. 6-9, the illustrated housing base 6 has a stepped interior surface, with an upstanding block 40 disposed adjacent to sidewall 8 under strike notch 9, which forms a narrow well 41 into which the outward portion of the lower edge of latch member [[3]]2 is closely received when in the fully closed locked position shown in Fig. 4 to provide additional security and rigidity. Also, a ramp-shaped stop block 64 is upstanding from base 6 at a location generally below the first set of apertures 11, 12, which interacts with latch member 2 in the manner described below. Stop block 64 also forms a narrow well 42 into which the inward portion of the lower edge of latch member [[3]]2 is closely received when in the fully closed position shown in Fig. 4 to provide additional security and rigidity. A steel pin 43 extends laterally through mating apertures in sidewalls 7 and 8 and stop block 64, and

Applicant : Bruce C. Bacon
Serial No. : 10/806,264
Confirmation : 1927
Atty. Dkt. : BAU03 P-308
Page : 5

provides a hard, durable surface against which latch member 2 abuts in the open position shown in Fig. 2.--

Please replace paragraph [0036] with the following amended paragraph.

[0036] --With reference to Figs. 16-18, the illustrated retainers 14 and 18 have a substantially identical size and shape, wherein each includes a hollow cylindrical body 82, with an enlarged head 83 at one end thereof, and a shank 84 disposed at the opposite end thereof. The head 83 of each of the retainers 14, 18 has a generally circular elevational configuration that is sized to be closely received within the mounting apertures 11 and 15 in sidewall 7 of housing 5. The shank 84 of each of the retainers 14, 18 is generally cylindrical in shape, and sized to be closely received within the mounting apertures 12, 16 in the opposite sidewall 8 of housing 5. The shank 84 of each of the retainers 14, 18 is also sized to be closely received through the aperture 53 of latch member 2 and the aperture 71 of release member 3 to pivotally mount the same within housing 5. With reference to Fig. 18, shanks 84 are deformed or swaged into the notches positioned along the non-circular interior surfaces 37 of mounting apertures 11 and 15 to secure retainers 14 in housing 5. The hollow cylindrical body 82 of each of the retainers 14, 18 includes an internally threaded aperture 85 extending coaxially therethrough to facilitate mounting housing 5 at a predetermined location using L-bracket 99 as described below.--

Applicant : Bruce C. Bacon
Serial No. : 10/806,264
Confirmation : 1927
Atty. Dkt. : BAU03 P-308
Page : 6

Please replace paragraph [0042] with the following amended paragraph.

[0042] --With reference to Figs. 2-4, when latch member 2 is in the fully open position shown in Fig. 2, U-shaped notch 49 is oriented upwardly at an angle of around 45 degrees, such that upper angled end edge 57 extends generally vertically, and lower angled end edge 58 extends generally horizontally, with rounded tip 60 extending past side edges 29 of strike notches 9 and 10, into a position between sidewalls 7 and 8. The lateral opening between side edges 29 of strike notches 9 and 10, and end edge 57 of latch member [[3]]2, as shown in Fig. 2, particularly in combination with chamfered housing edge 32, and the angled end edge 57 of latch member 2, provides an enlarged capture area or window into which lock strike 4 can be received, and properly engage latch member [[3]]2 to shift the same to one of the two closed positions shown in Figs. 3 and 4. Hence, even if lock strike 4 and rotary latch 1 are slightly misaligned, lock strike [[lock]]4 will not abut or impact housing 5, but will rather engage only latch member 2, to avoid damage or further misalignment for rotary latch 1.--

Please replace paragraph [0043] with the following amended paragraph.

[0043] --When lock strike [[lock]]4 rotates latch member 2 to the position shown in Fig. 3, the engagement surface 76 on the pawl arm 75 of release member 3 contacts the first pawl notch 51 on latch member 2, so as to positively retain lock strike 4 in rotary latch 1 in a partially closed, yet locked condition. This position is typically a safety feature which assures that the

Applicant : Bruce C. Bacon
Serial No. : 10/806,264
Confirmation : 1927
Atty. Dkt. : BAU03 P-308
Page : 7

associated closure will not inadvertently open, even if rotary latch 1 is not in the fully closed, locked position shown in Fig. 4. Further engagement between lock strike 4 and latch member [[3]]2 will rotate the latter to the fully closed, locked position shown in Fig. 4, wherein the engagement surface 76 on the pawl arm 75 of release member 3 contacts the second pawl notch 52 on latch member 2 to positively retain the same in place.--